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Letter dated 28 May 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on the Lupane by-elections in Zimbabwe, issued on 28 May 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Richard **Ryan**
Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 28 May 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the Lupane by-elections in Zimbabwe issued on 28 May 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union

The European Union condemns the intimidation and irregularities before and during the Lupane by-elections on 15 and 16 May 2004, which, together with continuing restrictions on freedom of association and on equal access to the media, meant that these elections cannot be judged free and fair.

The intimidation of voters and obstruction of campaigning by war veterans and youths, the registration of voters at polling stations by traditional leaders, the use of State apparatus in favour of the ruling party and the lack of access by the opposition to the voters' roll that had been amended until days before the election are just illustrations of an unacceptable electoral environment.

The European Union calls on the Government of Zimbabwe to allow every political party an equal level of political freedom. The European Union emphasizes the importance of creating an electoral environment conducive to free and fair elections — such as an independent electoral commission, equal access to the media, equal possibilities of holding political meetings — in line with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Parliamentary Forum Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region.

The European Union calls on all political parties to refrain from violence and intimidation before, during and after elections, and for the authorities to prevent violence, intimidation and irregularities.